

## ProCure Proton Therapy Center has treated 500 patients in Oklahoma City

Oklahoma City center draws patients from around the world



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Q&A with Rob Lake

ProCure Proton Therapy Center

treats 500th cancer patient

**Q: The 500th patient of ProCure Proton Therapy Center in Oklahoma City recently completed treatment. Can you explain the science behind proton therapy?**

**A:** Proton therapy is an advanced form of radiation treatment without many of the short- and long-term side effects often experienced with standard X-ray therapy, including the occurrence of secondary tumors and decreased quality of life. Like traditional radiation therapy, proton therapy kills cancer cells, but protons are more precisely targeted to the tumor which greatly reduces damage to the healthy tissue surrounding the tumor. Because it is so targeted, proton therapy can be particularly effective in treating children, who are more sensitive than adults to the side effects of radiation. Precise targeting also can make proton therapy ideal for treating tumors near vital organs, as well as brain head and neck, central nervous system, lung and prostate tumors and cancers that are not good surgical candidates.

**Q: I understand people worldwide come here for treatment. Can you tell us about some of them?**

**A:** Our center is among only nine in the U.S. and 40 worldwide, consequently physicians around the globe refer here. Since our July 2009 opening, more than 140 patients have come from 28 different states and five countries, including the Netherlands, Germany, India, Lebanon and the United Kingdom.

**Q: What has been the economic impact of these out-of-town visitors to Oklahoma City?**

**A:** Out-of town patients spend up to eight weeks in Oklahoma City. According to the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, the average visitor spends \$216 per day here, so the economic benefit of out-of-town patients alone is around \$1.6 million. This doesn't count the many family members who travel with the patient or those from other cities across the state who stay in Oklahoma City for the duration of their treatment. Because of the great time they had here, one family from the United Kingdom already has plans to return with additional family members for vacation.

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